



February 16, 2005

Copies sent to: KS, SI
Date: 2-16-05

Mike Chrisman, Secretary
California Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento CA 95814

Dear Secretary Chrisman:

Thank you for inviting us to participate in the CEQA Improvement Advisory Group.

We share the Governor's goal to encourage more efficient land use for new housing and infrastructure, while minimizing project impact on sensitive habitat and productive farmland.

Our three organizations have been meeting for several months to discuss this same topic. We were joined in these discussions by Gary Binger on behalf of the Urban Land Institute, which has recently published a report on initiatives to encourage smart growth in California.

As a result of these discussions, we have identified some key principles that we believe will lead to achievement of the goals identified by the Governor. These principles are set forth on the attached document: A New Approach for California Land Use and Environmental Policy. We believe that a discussion framed around these principles will be the most productive way to pursue the Governor's goals.

We look forward to the discussions with the Advisory Group and greatly appreciate the opportunity to participate.

Yours very truly,

for
Karen Douglas
Karen Douglas
Interim Executive Director
Planning & Conservation
League

for
Laura Stuchinsky
Laura Stuchinsky
Director, Land Use &
Transportation
Silicon Valley
Manufacturing Group

for
Tom Adams
Tom Adams
Board President
California League of
Conservation Voters

DRAFT

A NEW APPROACH FOR CALIFORNIA LAND USE AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

A new policy should include both incentives for development within the existing urbanized areas and disincentives for sprawl¹

Urban Area Incentives

- Create greater certainty for urban infill projects by expanding the current urban infill exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act.
- Allow communities to provide greater certainty for higher density housing/retail/ office projects in urbanized areas or near traditional central business districts by authorizing the creation of an infill overlay zone for discrete neighborhoods and local transportation corridors that will provide for the planning and environmental review of infill projects without repetitive or duplicative reviews.

Disincentives for Sprawl¹

- Resolve conflicts of interest when local governments approve projects despite significant adverse impacts on regional and interregional transportation, air quality or water supply and quality.
- Help fund existing programs to mitigate the effects of sprawl.
- Other Options.
 - Greater protection for viable agricultural land.
 - Limitations on the frequency of incremental general plan amendments outside the urbanized area.
 - Increase the use of the Natural Community Conservation Plans.

¹ A definition of sprawl is needed.